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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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The 1946-1949 Period: Successes of the Mincutang

1. The original nucleus of the present Chinese Nationalist groups in Burma was formed by the men of the 93 Division, which was stationed in Fohai (N 21-58, E 100-26) during the last war. Most of the leaders of the 93 Division were Cantonese and were professional soldiers. After the war many of them married Shan wives. They were recalled to K'unming in 1946 but refused to go and set up a sort of control of the Fohai area, carrying on extensive opium trade.
2. In 1947 a group that were the forerunners of the Communists but who gave themselves the name of Mincutang,<sup>1</sup> started fighting against the 93 in the Lants'ang district to the west of Sipsongpanna. The leaders of this new movement were SUB Ling-kwang and an ex-school teacher, LI Cu-yin. Lants'ang was formerly known as the Suhpatassu, or the "district of the eighteen Sawbwas", as the term is used in Burma. The aim of the Mincutang<sup>1</sup> was to seize all the sub-districts, which they succeeded in accomplishing after two years of fighting. It was this group that were propagandists for the Communists and made all kinds of promises to the local people of a new order, yet concealed their true identity.
3. They told the people that the old officials were no good because they would not accept any new changes that would benefit the people as a whole. They promised that under their regime all debts and marriage dowries would be abolished, a man with two buffalo would be made to give one to the man who had none, paddy would be taken from all those who had a surplus and given as seed to the poor, and that future officials would be chosen from among the people themselves. These glowing promises won considerable support from among the poorer classes. Although none of these promises ever materialized, they did serve the purpose for which they were intended inasmuch as the people were hoodwinked into believing them and were thus lured away temporarily from their former rulers.
4. After all of southern Lants'ang was in their hands, the Mincutang<sup>1</sup> turned their attention to Ch'eli district where the main opposing force to be dealt with was the Cantonese 93 Division. Many men of the Division had taken local Lul<sup>2</sup> wives

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and, as the fighting progressed, the relatives and often the women themselves were captured and killed. The 93 Division fought a losing battle all through 1949 and gradually had to withdraw into Kengtung state. LEOW Shang-hung, a big trader in Kengtung, made an effort to counter the Communists' success in Fohai by sending about 200 men into Lant'sang in December 1949, but the attempt was unsuccessful and LEOW himself died a few days after receiving the news that his men had been defeated. Most thought he committed suicide.

#### Background of the Kengtung State

5. Kengtung is the largest of the Shan states, with a population of 225,000 and covering an area of 12,000 square miles. It is situated east of the Salween River and ruled over by a Sawbwa, or hereditary Shan prince, named Sao SAILONG. The state is made up of various hill tribes in addition to the main Shan groups in the valleys. Of the hill tribes, there are the Lahu, Kachin, Hsam Tao, Hsam Hteun, Shen Ceung, E Kaw, En, Cawn, Lisu, and Fa Lawng. Kengtung Valley itself is settled mostly by the Hkuin type of Shans, although there are considerable numbers of Northern Shans and Lui. In the northern and eastern part of the state, most of the valleys are Lui areas, but in the southwest and western sub-districts there are large numbers of western shans.
6. The terrain is mostly mountainous except for the basin-like valleys. Kengtung Valley is the largest of these, and is 22 miles in length and about 14 in width. In the northern part the most important valleys are Mong Yang (N 21-50, E 99-40), Mong Lwe (N 21-45, E 99-40), Mong Twi (N 21-50, E 99-40) and Mong Ma (N 21-35, E 99-55). To the east, Mong Yawng (N 21-10, E 100-21), Mong Hkan (N 21-25, E 100-55), Mong He (N 21-33, E 100-50) and Mong Kai (N 21-15, E 100-05) are the main Lui areas. In the south, Mong Hpayak (N 20-52, E 99-55), Mong Lin (N 20-43, E 100-09), and Hawng Luk (N 20-28, E 99-56), all on the road to Tachilek (N 20-30, E 99-58) on the Thai border, are most important. At the present time the valleys in the southwestern part of the state are in the limelight because of the Chinese Nationalist strongholds in that area. These are Mong Tum (N 20-25, E 99-30) and Mong Hkok (N 20-45, E 99-25) both on the road to Mong Hsat, and Mong Lung (N 20-45, E 99-35) and Mong Yawn (N 20-10, E 99-25). To the west Mong Ping, (N 21-20, E 99-00) on the Kengtung-Taunggyi motor road, is the most strategic point and is 64 miles from Kengtung city. A little to the southwest of Mong Ping there are two valleys of Mong Pu-awn (N 21-10, E 99-05) and Mong Pu Long where there has been quite a bit of hard fighting between the Chinese Nationalists and the Burmese. The only motorable roads are from Kengtung to the Thai border at Mae Sai via Mong Hpayak, Mong Lin and Hawng Luk, and from Kengtung to Ta Kaw (N 21-14, E 98-42) on the Salween River via Mong Ping. Other mule roads in the state were good, but there has been no road work done during the last four and one-half years.
7. During the British days, administration of the state was carried on largely through the Sawbwa and his sub-district officials, or Pyas. The state administration handled all matters of roads and revenues. The judicial powers of the Sawbwa included the passing of death sentences, subject to sanction by the government authorities. Now the Kengtung Sawbwa is the only one even nominally given any authority, and his powers have been cut to less than half. He is under constant observation, and all his orders are closely censored by the Burmese. The people of the state never had any dealings with the Burmese in pre-independence days; in fact, the great majority of those living in the districts never saw a Burman. They always have had close commercial relations with the Chinese, and many originally came from Yunnan. There are large numbers who speak Chinese, but only the very small minority who went to mission schools or to lower Burma for training can speak Burmese.

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The Entry of the Chinese Nationalists and Allied  
Indigenous Groups from Yunnan into Kengtung State

8. The original number of armed men in the 93 Division did not exceed 5,000, but they were joined by a steady flow of Chinese Shans and Lahu from various parts of Yunnan. When LI MI crossed into Burma it was reported he had 6,000 men and the Sawbwas of Munai, Cuifang,<sup>3</sup> and Tashan.
9. The first real movement of indigenous groups from Yunnan into Burma began in November 1949 and continued on a fairly large scale through the spring of 1952. The Chinese Nationalist troops who entered Kengtung, although a defeated army unit, were a symbol of the Chinese Nationalist government whose authority was acknowledged, among others, by the Sawbwas of the Chinese Shan States. As the refugee groups who had resisted the Communists made good their escape from Yunnan, they promptly joined the Nationalist troops and offered to continue the fight against the Chinese Communists. During 1950, all the groups from Lants'ang district who joined brought the Chinese Nationalist total to over 15,000 men. The main objective of all was to re-enter Yunnan as soon as possible; they had no aggressive intentions or ambitions with respect to Burma. They were received by the local people as refugees, and many wealthy Chinese businessmen gave generous financial help.
10. The indigenous groups who joined the Chinese Nationalists in Burma were mostly from the districts of Shunning, Lants'ang and Ch'eli. There were also some from the Shan States in China, north of Lashio. The Sawbwa of Monghkawn was the main figure from that area. The groups included northern Lem and Lui Shans, Lahu, and Yunnanese Chinese. A breakdown of these groups, by districts and states of origin follows.

Lant'sang District

11. Tongcu State

The first attack made by the Cumintang<sup>1</sup> in Lant'sang was against Tongcu. This attack occurred about February 1948. KWANG Chi-cang, the chief, lost out after two weeks fighting and fled to Munai (N 22-43, E 99-47) to join his brother-in-law. SUH Ping-ling, the Sawbwa of Munai, mustered his state people and continued resistance from points outside of Munai until the rains started in May of the same year. KWANG and SUH both fled Yunnan and took up temporary residence in Mong Yang, Kengtung state.

Group: All Yunnanese  
Leader: KWANG Chi-cang  
Number: Not known but considerable force with dependents  
Location: Mong Yang area

12. Tashan State

Tashan is made up of mostly Yellow Lahu or Lahu-Shi who have taken on Chinese dress and customs. The chief of the state himself did not oppose the Communists but his people did.

Group: All Tashan Chinese  
Leader: Sub-chiefs of Tashan; names not known  
Number: 200 men, some with dependents  
Location: Mong Lwe, south of Mong Yang

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13. Ciufang State<sup>3</sup>

Ciufang state lies east of the Namlam River and is half Lahu and half Yunnanese. The chief, YANG Teu-ming, is a brother-in-law of SUH Ping-ling of Munai and was one of the strong opponents of the Cumingtang.<sup>1</sup> He was with the 93 Division in the Sipsongpanna area at the time they were driven out.

Group: Lahu and Yunnanese  
 Leader: YANG Teu-ming  
 Number: About 300 Lahu families who have settled in Kengtung state as cultivators, and between 500 and 700 Chinese  
 Location: Mong Yawng and Mong Hsat

14. Munai State

Munai has a very large population made up of Lahu and Yunnanese. It borders on the Wild Wa states. The chief, SUH Ping-ling, ranked as the strongest opponent to the Communists in Lant'sang. Munai was burned during the fighting in 1948 and many of the Chinese left when their chief fled, but only a few of the Lahu followed. SUH was arrested by the Burmese in early 1953 but escaped from the Mandalay prison and has rejoined the Chinese Nationalists. He was reported to be going to Chiangmai, Thailand some time in November.

Group: Yunnanese  
 Leader: SUH Ping-ling  
 Number: Actual figures are not known but are said to be the largest group from Lant'sang.  
 Location: Mong Pawk (N 22-00, E 99-20), northeast of Kengtung.

15. Tongkang State

This state is northeast of Menglien (N 22-20, E 99-36) and is made up of Lahu, Shans, and Yunnanese. When the Cantonese counterattacked in December 1949, the Lahu took a very active part in the operations and had to flee on short notice, leaving everything behind. One of their leaders was caught and killed by the Cumingtang<sup>1</sup> (who had by that time announced their real identity) and the other leader, KYA Wu, ordered most of the leading Lahu villagers to leave.

Group: Lahu  
 Leader: KYA Wu  
 Number: Between 400 and 500 with dependents  
 Location: Settled in existing Lahu villages and started some new ones as cultivators. Many of the men are still with the Chinese Nationalists.

16. Menglien State

The Cumingtang<sup>1</sup> took administrative measures early in 1948, and the people of Menglien tried to avoid fighting by receiving the Cumingtang as a new order. Their first action was to split up the state and appoint men in the sub-areas with the same title give to the Sawbwas. The existing Sawbwa, a brother-in-law of the Manglun Sawbwa, realized that it was only a matter of time before he would be arrested and fled into the southern Wa states in February 1949. He wanted to bring in 600 families to settle in Manglun, but the Burmese refused permission. Most of the Shans returned to Yunnan, only about 20 families remaining with the Sawbwa. He has kept from any affiliations with the Chinese Nationalists. The Lahu, under their own leaders, refused to accept the new

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regime and joined the Cantonese in the December fighting. Like those of Tongkang, they had to flee when the Communists conquered their main centers.

Group: Lahu  
 Leader: YAW Ta, KYA Kaw, and LI Asuh  
 Number: Well over 1,000  
 Location: Most have settled in Kengtung as cultivators

Shunning District

17. Kengma State

The Shan Sawbwa of Kengma held out the longest against the Communists. He fought for over a year before he had to flee in 1950. In the spring of 1951 he made another attempt to re-enter his state. He has been closely affiliated with the Chinese Nationalists all the time and has just returned from Formosa where he took both military and civil administrative training.

Group: Northern Shans and Yunnanese  
 Leader: Sao KEUNG Ma  
 Number: 3,000 men plus some dependents  
 Location: Southern Wa states and Mong Hsat

Ch'eli District

18. Ch'eli State

Ch'eli has always been the racial as well as the jurisdictional head of the Lui in the Sipsongpanna area. After World War II the district was cut up into eight sub-areas. The 93 Division held the Fohai and Mongse valleys until late 1949, and the Sawbwa of Ch'eli barely hung on until 1951 by appeasing the Communists. Demands became so great that all the brothers of the ruling family had to flee. Of the five brothers, Sao MAWN La aka Chac MCM La was the most determined to fight back. Undoubtedly he has the largest following at present in the Lui country. In 1952 he joined the Chinese Nationalists and has a large force now under arms guarding the border between Kengtung and Sipsongpanna.

Group: Lui Shans and Yunnanese  
 Leader: Sao MAWN La aka Chao MCM La  
 Number: 500 men and 120 women and children  
 Location: Mong Ma and Mong Yawng areas

19. Mongmangshang

Mongmangshang is a Yellow Lahu section which was formerly ruled over by two outlaw brothers, CUNG Sang and CUNG Suh. The older, CUNG Suh, was killed in fighting in 1940 but the younger has carried on as sole chief of the area until last year. The area is very mountainous and few attempts were ever made to take troops there. Last year (1952) the people were unable to visit the bazaars for salt because of their chief's stand against the Communists, so many decided to leave for Kengtung. CUNG Sang took most of his fighting men and fought his way to the border, joining the Chinese Nationalists at Mong Yang.

Group: Chinese Lahu  
 Leader: CUNG Sang  
 Number: 500 men and many families  
 Location: Mong Yang and Mong Lwe

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20. There are many other such groups, particularly from the northern areas, but information on them is scanty.
21. Early in 1950, when these groups were coming into Burma, the Kengtung Sawbwa made frantic appeals to the Burmese to help because his state police could not cope with the problems created by so many refugees. He was only accused of being in sympathy with the Chinese. No solution was offered by the Burmese to solve the problems of the distressed refugee groups, and it was at this point that the Chinese Nationalists took it upon themselves to try and give some kind of help. All able-bodied men joined the ranks of the Chinese Nationalists as the only solution.
22. Soon after the Chinese Nationalists became established in the Wa States and in Mong Yang, Mong Yawng and Mong Hsat, they called in all the leading headmen and told them that they were an army in exile and they would have to collect rice for their men. They issued receipts for all rice taken but paid cash for meat and vegetables. They told the people that if fate ever gave them victory over the Communists, payment would be made to all those who possessed receipts. The people agreed to this, but all those in areas supplying the Chinese Nationalists assumed the attitude that they were doing their part in meeting a state problem and told the state officials that they could not pay taxes as long as they had these additional expenses. The result was that the Sawbwa could only collect taxes in areas that did not have to give supplies.

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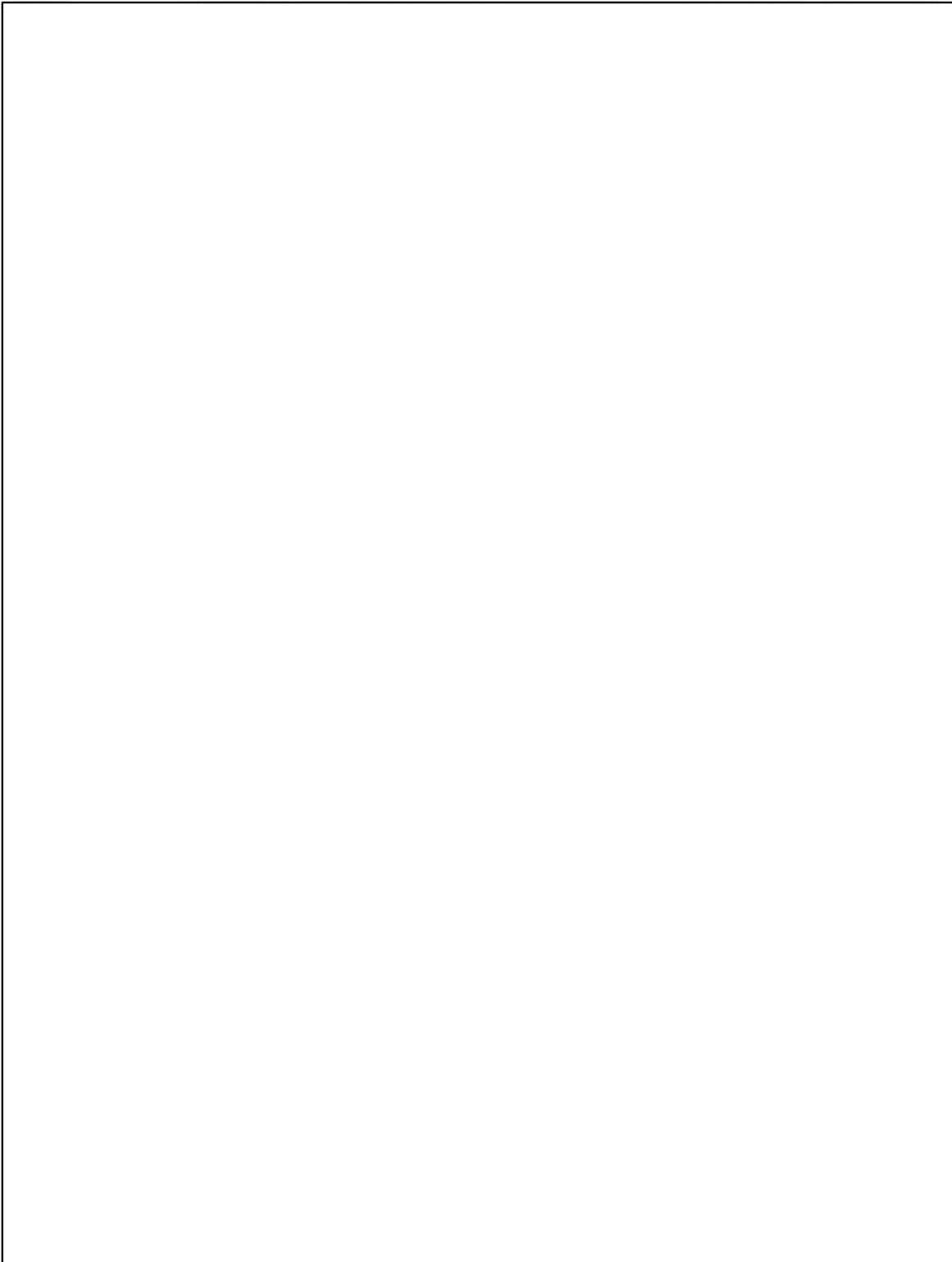
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30. It is generally thought that the Communists will enter Kengtung this coming dry season, with an outward pretext of coping with the Chinese Nationalists<sup>5</sup>. There is little hope that the Communists will withdraw from any area they enter. The Chinese Nationalists will fight but realize they cannot hold Kengtung against the present buildup of military strength along the Yunnan border.<sup>6</sup> They will have to retreat to join other fighting groups in Burma against the Burmese. The recent bombings of Mong Hsat and other outposts have brought about a change of attitude among the Chinese Nationalists. They have resolved to fight to the last man. Of course this remains to be seen but the bombings which occurred while efforts were still being made to try to find some solution to the Chinese Nationalist problem, have drawn all groups together in a resolute determination not to leave. Lt. Gen. LI Tse-fen, Chinese Nationalist deputy commander<sup>7</sup>, has resolved to fight not only the Burmese Army but also the Burmese Communists.

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